

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

As stated above, Applicants elect Group I, claims 1-6, drawn to a membrane filter unit, for further prosecution and respectfully traverse the requirement for restriction for the following reasons.

It is believed that any search for the invention embodied in Group I would necessarily include a search for the invention embodied in Group II. Thus, the simultaneous search for both groups is believed not to constitute an unreasonable search for the Patent Examiner.

In addition, it is believed that the objectives of streamlined examination and compact prosecution would be promoted if a search were conducted simultaneously for both groups. Also, the necessity of filing multiple patent applications in this case does not serve to promote the public interest because of the extra expense that is involved, in filing fees and examination costs, as well as the burden upon the public, due to the necessity of searching through a multiplicity of patent files in

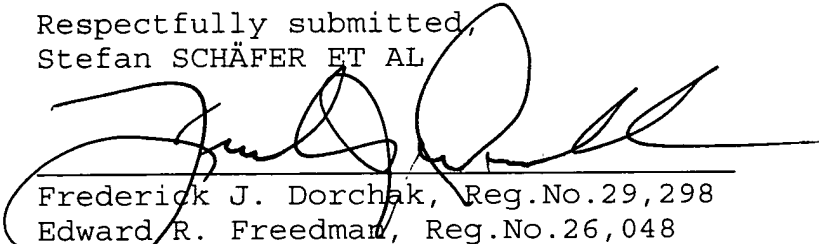
order to find the complete range of the subject matter claimed in several different patents that could otherwise be found in one issued patent only.

Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application for the non-elected invention.

For all these reasons, it is respectfully requested that the restriction requirement under 35 U.S.C. 121 be withdrawn and that an action on the merits of all the claims be rendered.

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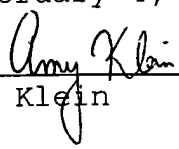
Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on February 4, 2009.



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